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Joint Inspection Unit

Implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report is presented to the General Assembly pursuant to a series of resolutions dating back to 1972, when the Secretary-General was first requested to submit an annual report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the major recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit. The same request was reiterated in several subsequent resolutions.

The report provides updates on the implementation of the recommendations contained in four reports of the Joint Inspection Unit, on: Administration of justice at the United Nations (A/55/57); Delegation of authority for management of human and financial resources in the United Nations Secretariat (A/55/857); Results-based budgeting: the experience of the United Nations system organizations (A/54/287); and Young professionals in selected organizations of the United Nations system: recruitment, management and retention (A/55/798).

The Secretary-General reiterates the concerns expressed in paragraphs 5 and 6 of his previous report (A/58/220) and invites the General Assembly to consider the discontinuance of the requirement for the report.

* A/59/150.

** The present report is being submitted after the deadline, owing to the need for extensive consultation with the various departments and offices that contributed to its contents.

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I. Introduction

1. The mandate for the present report emanates from a series of long-standing resolutions of the General Assembly dating from 1972, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it annually a report on the implementation of the major recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit. In paragraph (d) of its decision of 20 November 1975, the Secretary-General was requested to give priority to the implementation of the recommendations of the Unit approved by the legislative bodies and to provide adequate information thereon in his annual report. The General Assembly reiterated its request in resolutions 32/199 of 21 December 1977, 37/124 of 17 December 1982, 39/242 of 18 December 1984 and 48/221 of 23 December 1993.

2. In addition to the present report on the status of implementation, in its resolution 54/16 of 29 October 1999, the General Assembly approved a systematic follow-up mechanism and requested the Joint Inspection Unit to incorporate information on the status of implementation of its recommendations in its annual reports. The Unit's follow-up mechanism as endorsed by the General Assembly provides a more systematic approach to monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Joint Inspection Unit recommendations than the present annual report. At the same time, it will provide Member States with comprehensive, timely and relevant information. Given the above, and further to the concerns expressed in his previous report (A/58/220), the Secretary-General believes that it will be a duplicative exercise to continue to produce his annual report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit.

3. In considering whether it is necessary to continue with this report, the General Assembly may wish to consider the costs involved: over $1,000 per page to publish a document in six official languages. This report may therefore represent significant direct duplicative publication expenditures. This does not take into account the substantial amount of time involved of staff from the various funds and programmes who contribute to the preparation of the report.

4. To date, the Secretary-General has reported on the implementation of all the major recommendations contained in the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit up to and including the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. Accordingly, the present report addresses those recommendations considered at the fifty-fifth session that pertain to the United Nations and its funds and programmes, namely those contained in the reports on: young professionals in selected organizations of the United Nations system: recruitment, management and retention (A/55/798); results-based budgeting: the experience of the United Nations system organizations (A/54/287); administration of justice at the United Nations (A/55/57); and delegation of authority for management of human and financial resources in the United Nations Secretariat (A/55/857). In the interest of brevity, some of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit have been summarized.

II. Administration of justice at the United Nations

5. The comments below pertain to the recommendations contained in the Joint Inspection Unit report entitled "Administration of justice at the United Nations" (JIU/REP/00/1) (A/55/57). The comments by the Secretary-General on the report

were issued in document A/55/57/Add.1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly considered the report under agenda items 116 and 123 in conjunction with the report of the Secretary-General on human resources management reform (A/55/253 and Corr.1). Although in its related resolution 55/258 of 14 June 2001, the General Assembly did not make specific mention of the Joint Inspection Unit report on the subject, the findings and recommendations of the Unit were taken into account during the deliberations. The subject item entitled "administration of justice" was inscribed as an agenda item for the fifty-sixth session and, in its resolution, the General Assembly took note of the Unit's intention to continue its study of the possible need for higher jurisdiction in consultation with all organizations of the United Nations system, bearing in mind the national system of Member States of the United Nations. The General Assembly considered the report (A/57/441) at its fifty-seventh session and addressed many of the issues raised therein in its resolution 57/307 of 15 April 2003.

6. In its comments on the report (A/57/736), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions noted that the Secretary-General had agreed to implement some of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit and that the question of administration of justice should be considered in the context of the Secretary-General's overall human resources management reforms. Having considered the Unit's report entitled, "Reform of the administration of justice in the United Nations system: options for higher recourse instances" (A/57/441) and the comments of the Secretary-General and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination thereon (A/57/441/Add.1), the General Assembly affirmed the importance of continuing efforts to ensure that the administration of justice within the United Nations be of the highest standard and also affirmed the importance of the United Nations as an exemplary employer. The Secretary-General was urged to ensure effective and expeditious administration of justice in the Organization and to ensure the highest standard of efficiency, competence and integrity, as well as the principles of fairness and due process serve as the paramount consideration in the system of administration of justice within the United Nations.

Recommendation 1

Creation of an independent office for the settlement of disputes and the administration of justice, comprising an ombudsman function; the secretariat of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal; the secretariat of the Joint Appeals Board and the Committee for Professional Responsibility, established to replace the Joint Disciplinary Committee; and the Office of the Coordinator of the Panel of Counsel, which would report to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

7. As indicated in his report (A/55/57/Add.1), the Secretary-General was not in support of this recommendation. In its resolution 57/307 the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to take steps to ensure the independence of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal and the separation of its secretariat from the Office of Legal Affairs, to study the possibility of its financial independence and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-eighth session. The General Assembly's request was later reverted to its fifty-ninth session in resolution 58/270 of 23 December 2003. The Secretary-General has issued his report, entitled,

"Possibility of financial independence of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal from the Office of Legal Affairs (A/59/78)", for the consideration of the General Assembly. Essentially, the report recommends that the General Assembly approve the transfer of resources related to the Tribunal from section 8 of the budget, Legal affairs, to section 1, Overall policy-making, direction and coordination, effective as of the biennium 2006-2007.

Recommendation 2

Create an Ombudsman function as a replacement for the Panel on Discrimination and Other Grievances to strengthen the system's capability for informal conciliation, mediation and negotiation.

8. While the Ombudsman function has been created, it has not replaced the Panel on Discrimination and Other Grievances. This issue is addressed further in the report of the Secretary-General on administration of justice, which is being presented for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. The Office of the Ombudsman was established pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 55/258 and 56/253 of 24 December 2001 and the Ombudsman was appointed on 25 October 2002, pursuant to the promulgation of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2002/12.

Recommendation 3 (a)

Amend article 9 of the Statute of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal to eliminate present restrictions on the Tribunal's authority to order the rescission of the decision contested or the specific performance of the obligation invoked where it considers the application to be well founded. Furthermore, the Tribunal alone should decide on the appropriate amount of compensation to be paid.

9. In section V of his report to the General Assembly (A/56/800), the Secretary-General, having noted a number of differences between the statutes of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal and the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal and the practices of the two tribunals, stated that he would be prepared to reconsider his position on the question of specific performance if the statutes and practices of the two tribunals were fully harmonized. He also stated that, alternatively, the current system could be retained with an increase in the limits of compensation to be paid, should the Secretary-General decide, in the interest of the United Nations, that the applicant should be compensated without further action (see A/56/800, paras. 42 and 43).

Recommendation 3 (b)

Member States nominating candidates for the Administrative Tribunal are urged to make every effort to ensure that their candidates possess high professional qualifications and relevant experience, preferably in the judiciary.

10. In its resolution 55/159 of 12 December 2000, the General Assembly amended article 3 of the Statute of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal to introduce the need for members of the Tribunal to have appropriate legal qualifications and experience. In its resolution 58/87 of 9 December 2003, the General Assembly

further amended article 3 of the Statute of the Tribunal, requiring its members to have judicial qualifications or relevant legal experience in the field of administrative law. This provision will apply as and when the new members are elected by the General Assembly.

Recommendation 3 (c)

To strengthen the secretariat of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal by the addition of a post of Deputy Secretary, in order to reduce the backlog of cases before the Tribunal.

11. This recommendation was not accepted by the Secretary-General.

Recommendation 4

(a) The present Joint Disciplinary Committee should be replaced by the Committee for Professional Responsibility with functions analogous to those of the Joint Disciplinary Committee, but with greater emphasis on the ethical, as compared to the disciplinary, aspects of its role;

(b) New members of the Joint Appeals Board and the Committee for Professional Responsibility should be provided with basic legal training;

(c) The practice of accepting the unanimous recommendations of the Joint Appeals Board and the Committee for Professional Responsibility should be revived;

(d) The secretariat of the Joint Appeals Board should publish annual reports containing information on the cases heard, as well as general statistics on the disposition of such cases;

(e) Oral hearings before all United Nations appellate bodies should be the subject of further study, with a view to ascertaining whether this modality could contribute to the settlement of disputes and speed up the disposition of cases;

(f) The use of information technology, including videoconferencing, should be increased, with the aim of facilitating the access of field-based staff to dispute-settlement instances and appellate bodies.

12. With regard to part (a) of the recommendation, the Secretary-General questions the purpose and effect of this recommendation and the General Assembly requested no action on this issue in its resolution 57/307.

13. With regard to part (b) of the recommendation, the Secretary-General continues to ensure that general legal training is provided to the Joint Appeals Board and Joint Disciplinary Committee members by their secretariat, which also advises the Board and Committee members, when they are considering specific cases, on the legal and procedural issues involved. In paragraph 13 of its resolution 57/307, the General Assembly welcomed the organization of basic legal training courses for new members of the Joint Appeals Board and the Joint Disciplinary Committee and encouraged the Secretary-General to continue his efforts in this regard without additional budgetary implications.

14. With regard to part (c) of the recommendation, no change in policy has been implemented for the reasons stated in document A/55/57/Add.1. With regard to part (d) of the recommendation, the publication of reports on the outcome of the work of the Joint Appeals Board has been duly implemented. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/258, the Secretary-General has submitted three annual reports (A/56/800, A/58/300 and A/59/70) covering the periods 2000-2001, 2002 and 2003, respectively.

15. With regard to part (e) of the recommendation, the Secretary-General notes that there is no statutory prohibition against the holding of oral hearings before the Joint Appeals Board and oral hearings can be arranged when and where necessary. With regard to part (f) of the recommendation, concerning the use of information technology, including videoconferencing, the Secretary-General encourages the use of all information technology as a matter of course and on an as-needed basis.

Recommendation 5

Give further consideration to the revival of the advisory function of the International Court of Justice in the internal recourse procedure and encourage closer working relationships between the United Nations Administrative Tribunal and the other major tribunals in the United Nations system, including the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal with a view to rationalizing their competence and jurisdiction and harmonizing their jurisprudence.

16. The Secretary-General stated in his comments (A/55/57/Add.1) that the function of the International Court of Justice had been, in fact, limited to requests for advisory opinions on United Nations Administrative Tribunal judgements, and that such a function had been ceased, further to a decision of the General Assembly. In resolution 55/258, the General Assembly noted the intention of the Joint Inspection Unit to continue its study on a higher appeal instance and requested it to report to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

17. The Joint Inspection Unit suggested, inter alia, in its report (A/57/441), that the General Assembly consider asking the Sixth Committee to study the desirability of establishing an ad hoc panel that would be responsible for reviewing the judgement of the existing two tribunals or a future single one. In his report (A/57/441/Add.1), the Secretary-General noted that the members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) had decided, in 2001, not to pursue the introduction of a second-tier appellate mechanism. The Secretary-General also questioned the suggestion that a new ground of appeal, namely that the United Nations Administrative Tribunal had deviated from its jurisprudence, be added. This view was supported by the President of the Tribunal in his letter to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly (A/C.5/57/25) and in resolution 57/307, the General Assembly took note of the above but did not request that any action be taken on the matter.

18. With regard to the issue of the harmonization of the statutes of the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal and the United Nations Administrative Tribunal, the Secretary-General initially stated in his response to the Joint Inspection Unit recommendation contained in document A/55/57/Add.1, that such a proposal would require the General Assembly's consideration. In its resolution 55/258, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to take

necessary measures to close the gap as appropriate between the statutes of the two tribunals. In resolution 57/307, the Joint Inspection Unit was requested to continue to study the possibility of harmonizing the statutes of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal and the International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal for consideration by the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. The comments of the Secretary-General thereon will also be presented to the General Assembly.

Recommendation 6

Reclassify the post of the Coordinator of the Office of the Coordinator of the Panel of Counsel at a senior Professional level and fill it by a staff with strong legal qualification as a first step to enhance the availability of legal advice and representation for the staff and to provide staff with the option to be represented by current, retired and staff separated by resignation and other ways.

19. The post of Coordinator was reclassified to a Professional post in 2003. The staff rules previously restricting counsel for staff appealing an administrative decision or being the object of a disciplinary proceeding to current and retired staff members were amended in accordance with resolution 57/307 (paras. 28 and 29). Currently, former staff members may also serve as counsel and staff members may also seek outside counsel at his or her own expense.

III. Delegation of authority for management of human and financial resources in the United Nations Secretariat

20. The related Joint Inspection Unit report (A/55/857) was presented to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. The Advisory Committee and the Secretary-General commented upon the report in documents A/55/499 and A/55/857/Add.1, respectively. However, much of the general findings and recommendations contained in the report were deemed to have been overtaken by events and a number of reform initiatives affecting the subject matter were overlooked in the report.

21. In his report to the General Assembly (A/55/253 and Corr.1), the Secretary-General proposed several elements of an overall plan to build on the existing framework and the General Assembly took specific action on the matter in its resolution 55/258, endorsing paragraphs 22 and 23 of the Advisory Committee's report on accountability and responsibility and on management irregularities (A/55/499). As indicated by the Office of Internal Oversight Services in its report to the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly (A/58/211), the Department of Management has launched a task force to review delegation of authority in the Organization.

Recommendation 1

The Secretary-General should present to the General Assembly a comprehensive overall plan of action for delegation of authority based on a systematically developed concept, rather than on an ad hoc approach. Such a concept should define which areas of responsibility require that authority be retained centrally and those where authority can be

delegated in the interest of a more efficient management system. As detailed in chapter V.A, such a plan of action should, inter alia, contain the elements spelled out in recommendations 2 to 11 of this report.

22. Based on action 32 of the Secretary-General's report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387/Corr.1), the Department of Management initiated an assessment of delegation of authority in management areas. The assessment exercise, which took a holistic look at the definition of delegation, was participated in by all Headquarters departments and all offices away from Headquarters. As of the end of 2003, the following were its main findings: (a) programme managers are generally satisfied that delegation of authority in management areas are extensive and cover their needs well; (b) there are new areas where additional delegation might yield greater efficiency and effectiveness. A total of 25 new areas were identified by the working groups from Headquarters and the offices away from Headquarters. At this stage, appropriate processes and guidelines are being developed by the Department of Management to facilitate implementation of additional delegations; (c) it was widely felt that there is a need for sub-delegation of authority from heads of departments to the Assistant Secretaries-General, the divisional directors and subprogramme managers; and (d) the programme managers recommended that the Department of Management retain central responsibility in the following areas: (i) management of post structure; (ii) policy development in management; (iii) staff career planning, (iv) training of staff for career growth; (v) mobility policy; (vi) entitlement processing; (vii) corporate monitoring of performance in resource management; and (viii) budget.

Recommendation 2

The Secretary-General should take steps to ensure strict compliance with the procedures for the promulgation of administrative issuances (see ST/SGB/1997/1 and ST/SGB/1997/2), so as to ensure not only clarity in the formulation of procedures and instructions, but also avoidance of contradictions between administrative issuances. Issues of a binding administrative nature should be promulgated exclusively through the prescribed means.

Modifications to or cancellation of administrative issuances should only be promulgated by another administrative issuance of the same or higher rank, as amendments or revisions of the original documents.

23. The Secretariat has continued to follow the provisions of Secretary-General's bulletins ST/SGB/1997/1 and ST/SGB/1997/2 for the promulgation of administrative issuances, their abolition and amendment or revision. The Department of Management continues to work in close cooperation with the Office of Legal Affairs to ensure compliance with and respect of the principle of the hierarchy of legal norms.

Recommendation 3

The Secretary-General should review the provisions of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/151, dated 7 January 1976, entitled "Administration of the Staff Regulations and the Staff Rules", updating it as required to reflect the current situation.

Pursuant thereto, the Secretariat should promulgate one comprehensive administration instruction on the delegation of authority for the administration of the Staff Regulations and Rules, so as to reflect the current situation in clear terms.

24. Considerable work has already been done on the preparation of a comprehensive instruction updating and consolidating existing instruments governing delegation of authority in respect of the administration of the Staff Regulations and Rules. It will be finalized in the light of the work currently under way in the context of the implementation of action 32 of the report of the Secretary-General on reform (A/57/387 and Corr.1), to ensure consistency with the general approach governing delegation of authority.

Recommendation 4

The Secretary-General should be requested as a matter of urgency to promulgate a revised version of the Financial Regulations and Rules.

25. A revised edition of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations was promulgated in Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2003/7, dated 9 May 2003, approved by the General Assembly in its decision 57/573 of 20 December 2002 and took effect as from 1 January 2003. The revised Financial Rules were effective as from 28 February 2003.

Recommendation 5

The Secretary-General should be encouraged to take additional steps towards the establishment throughout the Secretariat of a "culture" of clarity, transparency and communication, taking into account the considerations described in chapter V.B of this report.

26. The Secretary-General agrees with the recommendation. Recognizing the need for a wider and a more transparent business culture, the Under-Secretary-General for Management has initiated an institutional mechanism through which each new policy development and its subsequent promulgation is vetted through a network of management and administrative officials from the global secretariat. In most departments and offices in the offices away from Headquarters programme managers have been conducting regular staff and town hall meetings involving staff from all levels to keep them abreast of new developments within the department and the organization. The Secretary-General himself broadcasts directly to the staff on major international issues and on policy matters. However, there is still room for improvement in this regard and systematic efforts will be made to continue the change towards a culture of transparency, clarity and communication.

Recommendation 6

The Secretary-General should institute the requirements that the delegation of authority to individuals should be clearly defined in individual delegation orders, in addition to the general delegation that may be included in the Staff Rules, the Financial Rules or the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation

or in Secretary-General's bulletins related to the organization of the Secretariat.

27. The current practice of delegation varies throughout the organization. It is done on a personal level, as in the cases of financial delegation, on a post level as in the case of human resources management, and on a level that is a mixture of person and post in the case of central services. While delegation in financial authority is in full compliance with Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/213/Rev.1, there is a need to streamline other delegation mechanisms and processes. The Department of Management is addressing these issues and will strive to achieve consistency in the application of delegation of authority to individuals. In administrative instruction ST/AI/2004/1, dated 8 March 2004, the Under-Secretary-General for Management issued a comprehensive new delegation of authority under the new Financial Regulations and Rules. The officials to whom this authority was delegated have issued further delegations, as appropriate.

Recommendation 7

In addition to the general training available to the Secretariat as a whole, managers to whom authority is to be delegated should be empowered through the provision of specialized training and briefings and with adequate support services. Furthermore, the Secretary-General should direct the central administrative services to guarantee to managers, upon their request, the availability of additional guidance as to the correct implementation and interpretation of financial, staff and programme planning regulations, rules and administrative instructions.

28. The Secretary-General endorses the principles enshrined in the recommendation. As a first step, the Secretariat has refined the requirements for managerial competencies in the vacancy announcement process and also in the selection of senior staff. Currently, the Department of Management is preparing a reference guide for senior managers on the use of delegation instruments, which should be released in early 2005. Effective 2005, there is also a plan to introduce a mandatory induction and training package for managerial appointees to cover human resources, financial management, and procurement. Further consideration will be given to introducing refresher training for managers to update their knowledge in administrative procedures and reinforce their managerial competencies.

Recommendation 8

The Secretary-General should undertake all efforts to optimize the functioning of the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) and the Intranet, both at Headquarters and in the field, so as to ensure constant and immediate access by managers to relevant information for the proper implementation of delegated authority.

29. The Secretary-General agrees with the recommendation. Systematic efforts have been made for the past several years to gradually implement IMIS at all duty stations, including the field missions of peacekeeping operations. IMIS is the key organizational tool that is used by the global secretariat for business process management relating to finance and human resources. However, there are other management tools, such as the Integrated Monitoring and Documentation

Information System and the Key Item Management Reporting System, which have been instituted for managers to secure real-time information in line with their delegated responsibilities.

Recommendation 9

The Secretary-General should ensure that the central administrative units retain an ongoing monitoring capacity through which they may gauge progress and detect possible deficiencies in the exercise by managers of delegated authority. To this end, it is essential to develop adequate information technologies and systems, as well as cooperation with pertinent oversight mechanisms.

30. Steps will be taken to ensure that the central administrative units retain an ongoing monitoring capacity. In this regard, significant progress has been achieved in several areas, including human resources action plans and the development of an Internet-based monitoring system; improved monitoring capacity of staff selection decisions provided by the electronically based Galaxy system and procurement services have initiated a real-time web-based system that enables the staff of the office, as well as its clients, to monitor the status of online procurement action. Further refinements of centralized monitoring systems will continue throughout the Secretariat.

Recommendation 10

The Secretary-General's effort to develop a comprehensive system of accountability should be based on the following principles: (a) managers should be provided with all necessary support, information and guidance; (b) adequate mechanisms should exist for the evaluation of performance and the strengthening of enforcement mechanisms to deal with cases of failure; and (c) performance indicators should be accompanied by measures to ensure that unsatisfactory achievements and non-compliance with work programmes or the Organization's policies, regulations and rules are taken into account in evaluating managers, shaping their careers and deciding on the level of authority that can be delegated to them.

31. The Secretary-General continues to strengthen the system of accountability outlined in his report on accountability and responsibility (A/55/270), taking into consideration the principles outlined above. Improvements in the provision of information, support and clarification have already been referred to in relation to recommendations 8 and 9 above.

32. The annual review of programme managers' performance in relation to the compact between the Secretary-General and each head of department has been strengthened by the introduction of the executive information report on management, which includes performance indicators relating to key financial and human resource management and the implementation of audit recommendations. The human resources action plan provides another mechanism of monitoring performance of delegated authority. When issuing financial delegation, past performance is carefully evaluated and brought to bear on the level of authority delegated. The effectiveness and relevance of the Accountability Panel, which was created in 2001 (see ST/SGB/2000/14 dated 23 October 2000) as the highest body responsible for addressing major managerial failures and identifying systemic

problems in the Organization, is being reviewed to make it a robust accountability institution.

Recommendation 11

The Secretary-General should ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, the views and suggestions of the staff are considered, and that full and meaningful consultations with staff representatives are undertaken in the context of the improved system of communication within the Secretariat.

33. The Secretary-General has always been willing to engage the staff in constructive and results-oriented dialogue. Unfortunately, the consultation process with staff representatives has suffered from a number of difficulties, which led to the temporary suspension of the Staff-Management Coordination Committee mechanism in 2003. Considerable efforts have been made to ensure that these difficulties are resolved in the near future and that the full consultation process resumes.

IV. Results-based budgeting: the experience of the United Nations system organizations

34. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit (A/54/287) was prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/205, in which the Assembly requested the Joint Inspection Unit to undertake an analytical and comparative study of the experience of the bodies of the United Nations system that were implementing an approach similar to results-based budgeting. The Secretary-General presented his comments on the Joint Inspection Unit report in document A/54/287/Add.1. Below is an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit.

Recommendation 1

In order to assure appropriate guidance from Member States in resolving the problem of the lack of agreed definitions for key results-based budgeting terms, the glossary of financial and budgetary terms should be reviewed and commented upon by the appropriate bodies of the United Nations system organizations.

35. In annexes I and II of his report on results-based budgeting (A/54/456), the Secretary-General provided a clearer definition of relevant terms, as well as suggested guidelines for programme managers in the formulation of objectives and expected accomplishments.

Recommendation 2

As a means for seeking to resolve existing concerns about the possible adaptation of results-based budgeting to the United Nations, and in order to ensure an appropriate participatory role of Member States in adapting results-based budgeting to the United Nations, an open-ended working group should be established at the level of the Fifth Committee, to meet as needed, within existing resource levels, at which secretariat officials, would provide briefings and respond to questions on all aspects of results-based budgeting.

36. The Secretary-General convened a retreat on results-based budgeting for Fifth Committee members from 18 to 20 September 2003. The retreat was sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations, with support from the Permanent Missions of Australia, the Netherlands and South Africa to the United Nations and from the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships. Presentations were given by experts from Australia, the Netherlands, South Africa and Sweden, as well as by representatives of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Management, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Health Organization. The retreat provided an opportunity for informal discussions and conversations about matters related to results-based budgeting and results-based management at the United Nations.

37. The Secretary-General also convened a retreat, from 10 to 12 June 2004, for members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination just prior to its forty-fourth session. Presentations were given by an expert from Denmark and also by representatives from the various departments and offices at United Nations Headquarters. The objective of the retreat was to facilitate deliberations and decision-making on matters related to the application of results-based budgeting concepts in the context of the Committee's review of the strategic framework for the period 2006-2007.

Recommendation 3

Subject to the General Assembly decision to use results-based budgeting for the United Nations, the United Nations System Staff College and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research should be invited to conduct seminars and workshops to help to familiarize staff and representatives of Member States with results-based budgeting.

38. The Department of Management, at the request of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, has provided annual briefings to the Fifth Committee on the budgetary process of the United Nations, including results-based budgeting and results-based management.

Recommendation 4

Future reporting from the Secretary-General on results-based budgeting should include a comprehensive assessment of changes that would be required to assure the readiness of the Organization for results-based budgeting with regard to areas such as regulations, procedures, management information systems and training.

39. The Secretary-General took this recommendation into account in preparing his report on results-based budgeting (A/54/456). Paragraphs 64 to 73 of that report provide a description of changes or conditions necessary for the implementation of the results-based budgeting elements. The Secretary-General also submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session an interim report on results-based budgeting for the biennium 2002-2003 (A/57/478), in which he discussed the experience gained and lessons learned, the logical framework, data collection, data-collection methods, information systems, analysis and reporting procedures, as well as issues regarding monitoring and evaluation, benchmarking, help-desk functions, web sites, training and coaching. The Office of Internal Oversight Services also

submitted a report to the General Assembly on implementation of all provisions of General Assembly resolution 55/231 of 23 December 2000 on results-based budgeting (A/57/474). The General Assembly, in its decision 57/575 of 20 December 2002, took note of both reports and endorsed the approach taken therein.

40. Reporting on results-based budgeting was also done in the introduction of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budgets for the bienniums 2002-2003 and 2004-2005 (A/56/6 (Introduction) and A/58/6 (Introduction)). In part one of the strategic framework for the period 2006-2007 (A/59/6 (part one)), an explanation was also given on results-based budgeting concepts with respect to the structure and format of the framework, legislative mandates and collective responsibility, definitions and lessons learned.

Recommendation 5

Reflecting the uncertainty about how to reflect external factors in the accountability of programme managers under results-based budgeting, the Secretary-General should submit to the General Assembly as soon as possible a report containing recommendations on the matter, accompanied by the comments of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

41. In paragraphs 32 and 33 of his report on results-based budgeting (A/54/456), the Secretary-General focused on the question of external factors and has taken the recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit into account in his analysis and reporting to the General Assembly.

Recommendation 6

In view of their roles in the current programme budget process, the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee should be invited to comment on their respective roles under results-based budgeting.

42. The Secretary-General has taken note of the recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit. He provided a description of the expected changes in the review and approval process of the programme budget in paragraphs 57 to 59 of his report on results-based budgeting (A/54/456). The Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee, in their review of the Secretary-General's proposed programme budgets, continue to provide comments and suggestions for improving the implementation of results-based budgeting, particularly with respect to application of the logical framework in relation to objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement. They have also addressed the question of adequate monitoring and evaluation procedures.

V. Young professionals in selected organizations of the United Nations system: recruitment, management and retention

43. The objective of the JIU report (A/55/798) was to compare and analyse policies and practices with regard to the recruitment and management of entry-level professionals, with a view to making recommendations as to ways to prepare and retain a cadre of dedicated and competent professionals.

44. The main recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit include inter alia, specific efforts to reduce the age at recruitment for junior Professional posts, more careful monitoring of trends on separations, set up a structure to assist the integration of young professionals, increase opportunities for them to be assigned both at Headquarters and in the field; improve career development for them and facilitate spousal employment. The report was considered by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session as part of the larger agenda item of human resources reforms and some of the Joint Inspection Unit recommendations were taken into account by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/258.

Recommendation 1

Secretariats should undertake specific efforts to reduce the age at recruitment for all Professional posts, and for P-1 to P-3 posts in particular.

The United Nations Secretariat may wish to review the adequacy of the age limit presently imposed for national competitive recruitment examination candidates.

45. The Secretary-General agreed that efforts should be made overall to reduce the age of recruitment, keeping in mind that requirements must be tailored to the needs of each organization, especially as the national competitive examination is not the primary mode of selecting junior professionals in every organization. For the reasons provided in document A/55/798/Add.1, however, the imposition of a reduced age limit on candidates for the national competitive examination was accepted by the General Assembly. Alternatively, it was accepted that the current age limit for the examination should be maintained and that the Secretariat would ensure that the placement of qualified candidates is sped up once the examination is completed. The United Nations Secretariat has introduced new guidelines for determination of both the level and step on recruitment to the Professional category.

Recommendation 2

Trends concerning separations of Professional staff in the United Nations system should be more carefully monitored through:

(a) The inclusion by the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Personnel and General Administrative Questions) in its annual publication, entitled "Personnel Statistics" of data on separation of Professional staff by grade and type of separation;

(b) The design of exit questionnaires to better identify causes of resignations. Such questionnaires may be completed or replaced by structured exit interviews.

46. The organizations of the United Nations system all agreed that the use of structured exit questionnaires provides a sound basis for capturing data and analysing separations systematically. In that regard, the Secretariat has developed and distributed the appropriate questionnaire to all departments and is considering the most efficient ways of capturing the data electronically, as well as of ensuring that the questionnaire is completed in all cases. Once all organizations have captured and electronically stored these findings in their databases, the information will then be stored and analysed in the CEB common system database.

Recommendation 3

Secretariats of all organizations concerned should speed up recruitment processes by imposing strict deadlines for the review of applications by managers and the placement of candidates.

47. Organizations throughout the system have implemented proactive approaches to their recruitment processes. While some organizations have implemented deadline-oriented methods, the United Nations Secretariat is of the view that the imposition of strict deadlines may reduce the Organization's flexibility in recruiting the right persons at the right time and in the right place. Nevertheless, the Secretariat has taken several recent measures to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of all recruitment processes, such as the increased use of electronic communications, including online applications; monitoring and tracking of applications; development of generic job profiles; early identification of workforce needs; simplification of placement processes and use of rosters. These measures have resulted in an appreciable reduction in recruitment time for young professionals.

Recommendation 4

Further efforts should be undertaken by the Secretariat to accelerate the placement of successful national competitive recruitment examination candidates, reduce the number of candidates presently on the roster and optimize the use of this roster, through:

(a) Strengthening linkages among human resources planning, examinations and staffing, which should be conducted as an integrated process, rather than as separate operations;

(b) Submitting proposals to the General Assembly to further contain the number of candidates on the roster, such as time limitations on its validity or the automatic suspension of the examination in occupational groups for which the roster exceeds a predetermined number of candidates;

(c) Sharing the roster with other organizations, especially for common occupational fields.

48. The United Nations Secretariat is continuing its efforts to accelerate the placement of successful national competitive recruitment examination candidates.

Planning, examinations and staffing are being integrated into a continuous process, inter alia, through departmental human resources action plans. The roster of successful candidates is an essential and integral part of the recruitment process and, in the view of the Secretariat, should not be administratively restricted beyond the regulations currently in force. The Secretariat agrees to pursue the sharing of this roster with other organizations, and welcomes the possibility that this will accord with the widening of their recruitment networks; however, it must be kept in mind that each organization must meet its own recruitment requirements and procedures.

49. Currently there exists a mechanism for suspension of examinations in occupational groups with large rosters. The number of candidates in each roster and the projected number of vacancies in each occupational group are reviewed annually prior to the determination of the groups to be offered in the next examination. As a result, examinations are offered for only those occupational groups with small rosters which cannot meet the demands of the Organization for the following two years. Limiting the validity of the roster may be detrimental to candidates in highly specialized groups in which not many vacancies occur. Instead, the placing of the candidates at higher levels could be considered, should they have the required experience.

Recommendation 5

The General Assembly may wish to call upon Member States to cooperate more effectively in the organization of the examination and, in particular, in its publicity. The Secretary-General could also include in regular reports on human resources management examples of good practices in this regard.

50. While this recommendation is primarily addressed to the United Nations Secretariat, all organizations recognize the instrumental role that Member States can play in widely disseminating information on employment opportunities and upholding the principles laid down in Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations. Organizations would also welcome the sharing of experiences and best practices of Member States regarding the integration, orientation and development of staff. The United Nations Secretariat has always responded and will continue to respond to specific publicity requests from Member States to disseminate the information. Specifically, the Office of Human Resources Management has cooperated with Member States in the preparation of information sessions and presentations both at Headquarters and abroad. Most recently, and in cooperation with the Department of Public Information, the Office of Human Resources Management produced video support for publicity specifically tailored to the needs of a given Member State.

Recommendation 6

Secretariats that have not done so should set up structures to assist with the successful integration of young professionals during their first months through:

(a) Clearly identifying focal points in substantive departments to assist new recruits with all practical problems;

(b) Designing appropriate orientation courses for the young professionals;

(c) Instituting mentoring programmes whereby more senior officers can advise young professionals on substantive and career issues.

51. Organizations have recognized the importance of orientation and induction programmes in order for new officials at all levels to perform effectively, and efficiently, as well as to create a shared understanding of an organization's vision and culture. Zero nominal growth has somewhat handicapped organizations' capacity to take large initiatives in this regard; nonetheless, a number of pilot orientation and mentoring programmes are being instituted at the organizational level and CEB has supported the development of a common system orientation training programme through the United Nations System Staff College.

52. With regard to the successful integration of junior professionals during their first months of service, all major established offices have identified focal points for national competitive examination recruitment, placement and orientation and the Special Orientation and Development Professional Programme for Junior Professionals, introduced in 1996, is now being offered four times a year. Owing to efficient scheduling and operations, the average waiting time for a new Professional to attend the programme in New York has been reduced from 8 months in 2000/01 to four months in 2002/03. The programmes will continue to be offered at the same rate to achieve the target average waiting time of less than three months.

Recommendation 7

Secretariats of organizations concerned should offer the opportunity to junior professional staff members to pursue studies and research in fields of relevance to their work by making them eligible sooner for study leave or by instituting new part-time study schemes.

53. The provision of developmental opportunities is generally recognized as an important element in attracting and retaining a quality workforce. Such opportunities must be managed within budgetary constraints and in the light of an organization's projected skill/competence requirements.

Recommendation 8

Secretariats of organizations concerned should increase opportunities for young professionals to be assigned both at Headquarters and in the field in the course of their first five or six years. The Secretariat of the United Nations, in particular, should further improve career development for young professionals. In due course, it should assess the impact of its managed reassignment programme to ensure that it facilitates mobility, not only between departments, but also between duty stations and that it contributes to upward as well as lateral mobility.

54. Organizations recognize that mobility offers an opportunity to enhance the flexibility of its workforce by providing staff with on-the-job learning experiences through which to develop a broader understanding of the work of an organization as well as new skills. It should be recalled that a number of organizations have no programmatic need for geographical mobility. The United Nations Secretariat has introduced as part of the new staff selection system, a managed reassignment

programme, which has been administered by the Office of Human Resources Management over the past two years. During that period, 111 candidates recruited between 1 January 2000 and 31 August 2001 were eligible for participation. The programme has proved to be a good career development tool for young professionals — staff moved between departments, duty stations and occupation groups. The largest number of eligible participants moved within their own departments, 37 staff (33 per cent); 29 (26 per cent) moved to a higher level post, 28 (25 per cent) participated in managed reassignment programmes and changed departments and duty stations; 5 staff members (5 per cent) went on peacekeeping assignments. A growing number of staff (4) took special leave between their first and second years for advanced studies and research in the fields relevant to their work.

Recommendation 9

Managers in the organizations concerned should devote sufficient time and attention to the development of their junior staff. Appraisals of the way in which they discharge this responsibility should be an integral part of their performance evaluation.

55. Organizations' management development programmes and performance appraisal systems are increasingly emphasizing the importance of the supervisors' and managers' role in supporting effective people management and development, regardless of age group. This is evidenced, for example, in competency frameworks, such as those of the United Nations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Labour Organization.

56. Primary responsibility for the timely implementation of the performance appraisal of individual staff members rests with the supervisor, who is held accountable in his or her own performance appraisal for managing performance and empowering others. The system includes the supervisor's setting the yearly work plan, the selection of the competencies to be demonstrated, the setting of the learning and career development plan with the individual staff members and then the provision of ongoing feedback, mid-point review and final appraisal.

Recommendation 10

Efforts to facilitate spousal employment should be undertaken as follows: (a) The setting up of joint family-career transition programmes in secretariats at major duty stations; (b) governing bodies of organizations that still forbid spousal employment should rescind this restriction by amending the relevant staff regulations; (c) the General Assembly should renew its call to Governments in host countries to consider granting work permits for spouses accompanying staff members and monitor the implementation of relevant resolutions.

57. As stated in the former Administrative Committee on Coordination (now CEB) policy statement, entitled "Work/family agenda", organizations of the United Nations common system are committed to introducing — as best fits each organization's structure and mandate — supportive measures to enhance employment opportunities for staff members' partners. To this end, the Participating Agencies Mobility System was introduced. The system provides staff members and their partners with a simple electronic means over the Internet of bringing their

career aspirations to the attention of any other agency anywhere in the world. A feasibility study to extend the system (phase II) with the introduction of a searchable database and the inclusion of a broader array of international organizations will be undertaken in the third quarter of 2001.

58. Some progress has been made in the complex area of support for spousal employment, including the development of spouse support networks in many duty stations. In New York, for example, spouses of staff members who recently came to the duty station are being invited by the Office of Human Resources Management to information sessions to acclimatize themselves better to the location, to provide them with tools to find work in the labour market and to encourage them to form self-help networks. However, the issue of spousal employment remains a major concern of staff and constitutes a significant obstacle to staff mobility.

59. The United Nations has joined partnerjob.com on a trial basis. This non-governmental organization provides a database where jobs by member organizations and curricula vitae of spouses and partners can be posted. Other members of partnerjob.com are large international companies, international organizations, such as the Asian Development Bank and the European Space Agency, and other United Nations organizations, such as the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Organizations systemwide strongly support efforts to encourage host Governments to consider granting work permits for spouses accompanying staff members.